

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

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1. A method of processing a telephone call prior to connecting the telephone call, comprising:
    - 5 querying a database containing information about ported telephone numbers prior to connecting the telephone call; and determining whether the telephone call is directed to a telephone number that has been ported.
  - 10 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising blocking the telephone call if it is determined that the telephone number has been ported.
  - 15 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the call from being connected to the telephone number.
  4. The method of claim 2, wherein the blocking step redirecting the telephone call to an operator.
  - 20 5. The method of claim 2, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing a billing method for the telephone call.
  6. The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone call is a collect call.

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7. The method of claim 6, wherein the collect call is blocked.
  8. The method of claim 1, wherein the telephone call is a bill-to-third-party call.
  - 5 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the bill-to-third-party call is blocked.
  10. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing an indicator in a call detail record associated with the telephone call if it is determined that the telephone number has been ported.
  - 10 11. A method for determining billability of a telephone call, comprising:  
querying a database identifying information relating to area codes and office exchange numbers prior to connection of the telephone call; and  
determining from the information whether an originating carrier originating the  
15 telephone call has a billing relationship with a terminating carrier terminating the telephone call.
  12. The method of claim 11, wherein the billing relationship is direct.
  - 20 13. The method of claim 11, wherein the billing relationship is indirect.
  14. The method of claim 11, wherein the telephone call is a collect call.

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15. The method of claim 11, wherein the telephone call is a bill-to-third-party call.
16. The method of claim 11, further comprising blocking the telephone call if it is determined that the originating carrier does not have a billing relationship with the terminating carrier.  
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17. The method of claim 16, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the call from being connected to the telephone number.
- 10 18. The method of claim 16, wherein the blocking step redirecting the telephone call to an operator.
19. The method of claim 16, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing a billing method for the telephone call.  
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20. The method of claim 11, further comprising providing an indicator in a call detail record associated with the telephone call if it is determined that the originating carrier does not have a billing relationship with the terminating carrier.
21. A method for detecting subscriber fraud related to a collect telephone call associated with a dialed telephone number, comprising:  
20 performing a reverse directory lookup query in a database;

identifying dialed telephone number listing information associated with the dialed telephone number;

comparing the dialed telephone number listing information to listing information including associated telephone numbers to identify other telephone numbers associated 5 with the dialed telephone number listing information; and

querying a payment information database using the other telephone numbers to determine if any of the other telephone numbers are associated with a past history of at least one of bad debt, unbillability, and fraud.

10 22. The method of claim 21, further comprising initiating fraud prevention activity.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the fraud prevention activity includes blocking the collect call.

15 24. The method of claim 23, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the collect call from being connected to the dialed telephone number.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the collect call to an operator.

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26. The method of claim 23, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the collect call.

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27. The method of claim 21, wherein the listing information includes a listed address.
28. The method of claim 21, wherein the listing information includes a listed name.
- 5    29. A method for detecting subscriber fraud related to a bill-to-third-party telephone call associated with a billing telephone number, comprising:  
            performing a reverse directory lookup query of the billing telephone number in a database;  
            identifying bill-to listing information associated with the billing telephone number;  
10     comparing the bill-to listing information in said query to listing information including associated telephone numbers to identify other telephone numbers associated with the bill-to listing information; and  
            querying a payment information database using the other telephone numbers to determine if any of the other numbers are associated with a past history of at least one of  
15     bad debt, unbillability, and fraud.
30. The method of claim 29, further comprising initiating fraud prevention activity.
- 20     31. The method of claim 30, wherein the fraud prevention activity includes blocking the bill-to-third-party telephone call.
32. The method of claim 31, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the bill-to-third-party telephone call from being connected.

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33. The method of claim 31, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the bill-to-third-party telephone call to an operator.
34. The method of claim 31, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the bill-to-third-party call.
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35. The method of claim 29, wherein the bill-to listing information includes a listed address.
- 10 36. The method of claim 29, wherein the bill-to listing information includes a listed name.
37. A method of processing a telephone call, comprising:  
establishing a dialed telephone number for the telephone call;  
comparing the dialed telephone number to an allowed list containing allowed  
15 telephone numbers and allowed names to determine if the dialed telephone number is contained in the allowed list;  
preventing the telephone call from being connected if the dialed telephone number is not contained in the allowed list;  
performing a reverse directory lookup query in a database to determine a listed name  
20 associated with the dialed telephone number;  
comparing the listed name to the allowed list to determine if the listed name is contained in the allowed list; and

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~~preventing the telephone call from being connected if the listed name is not contained in the allowed list.~~

38. The call processing method of claim 23, wherein the allowed list also includes  
5 allowed addresses, the method further comprising:

determining a listed address associated with the dialed telephone number;  
comparing the listed address to the allowed list to determine if the listed address is  
contained in the allowed list; and

blocking the telephone call from being connected if the listed address is not contained  
10 in the allowed list.

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the  
telephone call from being connected to the dialed telephone number.

15 40. The method of claim 38, wherein the blocking step comprises redirecting the  
telephone call to an operator.

41. A method of providing credit information to a provider of collect call services prior to  
connection of a collect call associated with a dialed number, comprising:  
20 performing a reverse directory lookup query in a directory assistance database;  
identifying listing information associated with the dialed number;  
querying a credit reporting database using the listing information to retrieve credit  
information related to the listing information; and

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analyzing the credit information to determine whether the collect call should be connected.

42. A method of providing credit information to a provider of collect call services prior to connection of a collect call associated with a dialed number, comprising:

5 identifying listing information associated with the dialed number;  
querying a credit reporting database using the listing information to retrieve credit information related to the listing information; and

10 analyzing the credit information to determine whether the collect call should be connected.

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43. The method of claim 42, further comprising determining a credit limit associated with the collect call.

15 44. The method of claim 42, further comprising blocking the collect call if analysis of the credit information indicates bad credit is associated with the listing information.

20 45. The method of claim 44, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the collect call from being connected to the dialed number.

46. The method of claim 44, wherein the blocking step redirecting the collect call to an operator.

47. The method of claim 44, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the collect call.
48. The method of claim 42, wherein the credit information is used to establish a credit limit for the collect call.
49. The method of claim 42, wherein the listing information includes a listed address.
50. The method of claim 42, wherein the listing information includes a listed name.
51. The method of claim 42, wherein the credit information includes a credit score.
52. The method of claim 42, wherein the credit information includes credit history information.
53. A method of providing credit information to a provider of bill-to-third-party call services prior to connection of a bill-to-third-party call, the bill-to-third-party call associated with a bill-to telephone number, the method comprising:  
20 performing a reverse directory lookup query in a database;  
identifying listing information associated with the bill-to number;  
querying a credit reporting database using the listing information to retrieve credit information related to the listing information; and

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~~analyzing the credit information to determine whether the bill-to-third-party call should be connected.~~

54. The method of claim 53, further comprising determining a credit limit associated with  
5 the bill-to-third-party call.

55. The method of claim 53, wherein said credit information is used to establish a credit limit for the bill-to-third-party call.

10 56. The method of claim 53, further comprising blocking the bill-to-third-party call if analysis of the credit information indicates that bad credit is associated with the listing information.

15 57. The method of claim 56, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the bill-to-third-party call from being connected.

58. The method of claim 56, wherein the blocking step redirecting the bill-to-third-party call to an operator.

20 59. The method of claim 56, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the bill-to-third-party call.

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60. The method of claim 53, wherein the credit information is used to establish a credit limit for the bill-to-third-party call.

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61. The method of claim 53, wherein the listing information includes a listed address.

62. The method of claim 53, wherein the listing information includes a listed name.

63. The method of claim 53, wherein the credit information includes a credit score.

10 64. The method of claim 53, wherein the credit information includes credit history information

15 65. A method for processing a telephone call, comprising:

identifying a carrier associated with a telephone number; and

15 querying a database associated with the carrier, the database containing telephone numbers associated with switchless resellers, using the telephone number to determine if the telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller.

20 66. The method of claim 65, further comprising blocking the telephone call if the telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller.

67. The method of claim 66, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing telephone call from being connected.

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68. The method of claim 66, wherein the blocking step redirecting the telephone call to an operator.
- 5 69. The method of claim 66, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the telephone call.
70. A method of processing a telephone call, comprising:  
identifying a carrier associated with a dialed telephone number;  
10 querying a database containing telephone numbers using the dialed telephone number to determine if the carrier services the dialed telephone number; and  
determining that the dialed telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller if the carrier does not service the dialed telephone number.
- 15 71. The call processing method of claim 70, further comprising blocking the telephone call if the dialed telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller.
72. The method of claim 71, wherein the blocking step comprises preventing the telephone call from being connected.
- 20 73. The method of claim 71, wherein the blocking step redirecting the telephone call to an operator.

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74. The method of claim 71, wherein the blocking step comprises establishing an alternative billing method for the telephone call.
75. The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database is a customer service database.
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76. The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the customer service database is belongs to the carrier.
- 10 77. The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database contains service records.
78. The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database belongs to the carrier.
- 15 79. The call processing method of claim 70, wherein the database is a directory assistance database.
80. A method of processing a telephone call, comprising:  
identifying a carrier associated with a dialed telephone number;  
20 determining if the carrier services the dialed telephone number; and  
determining that the dialed telephone number is associated with a switchless reseller if the carrier does not service the dialed telephone number.